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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01
/032 W
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P R 070810Z OCT 77
FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6474
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY
INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
USUN NEW YORK 1543

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 1442

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJECT: MEDICAL CONDITION OF ROBERT SOBUKWE

REF: (A) CAPE TOWN 1321, (B) CAPE TOWN 1332

SUMMARY: PRESS REPORTS OCT. 6 CONFIRMED PUBLICLY FOR FIRST TIME THAT FORMER PAC LEADER ROBERT SOBUKWE WAS OPERATED ON FOR A LUNG TUMOR. IN PRIVATE, DOCTORS HAVE REPORTEDLY TERMED HIS ILLNESS "TERMINAL." END SUMMARY

1. LOCAL PRESS CARRIED REPORTS OCT. 6 STATING THAT ROBERT SOBUKWE, BANNED FORMER PRESIDENT OF PAN AFRICAN CONGRESS (PAC), HAD LUNG TUMOR REMOVED IN OPERATION PERFORMED SEPT. 14 (REFTEL B), THAT HE WOULD RECEIVE IN-PATIENT TREATMENT FOR FEW MORE WEEKS AND THAT HIS CONDITION IS SATISFACTORY. PREVIOUS REPORTS HAD STATED ONLY THAT HE HAD HAD "A LUNG OPERATION." SOBUKWE TOLD CONGENOFF, WHO VISITED HIM OCT. 6 WITH REV. THEO KOTZE OF CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE, THAT HE HAD AUTHORIZED THE REPORTS TO STILL "RUMORS" THAT WERE BEGINNING TO CIRCULATE ABOUT HIS CONDITION.
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2. PRIOR TO VISIT, REV. KOTZE INFORMED CONGENOFF THAT SOBUKWE WAS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING A THREE-WEEK PERIOD OF "RADIO-THERAPY" TREATMENT AFTER WHICH TREATMENT WILL BE DISCONTINUED FOR 2 WEEKS AND THEN RESUMED AGAIN FOR ANOTHER 3 WEEKS. DOCTORS HAVE INDICATED THAT DURING THE 2-WEEK INTERVAL, WHICH BEGINS OCT. 14,

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MR. SOBUKWE MAY LEAVE HOSPITAL. KOTZE SAID SOBUKWE HAS APPLIED TO LOCAL MAGISTRATE TO PERMIT HIM TO MOVE INTO RESIDENCE OF ANGLICAN SUFFRAGAN BISHOP OF CAPE TOWN PATRICK MATOLENGWE DURING THAT TIME. PERMISSION WOULD BE REQUIRED IN TERMS OF SOBUKWE'S BANNING ORDER AND ALSO BECAUSE SUFFRAGAN BISHOP'S RESIDENCE LOCATED IN WHITE SUBURB OF NEWLANDS. KOTZE SAID DOCTORS HAVE INDICATED APPROVAL OF SUCH MOVE SINCE RESIDENCE IS NEAR GROOTE SCHUUR HOSPITAL AND WOULD ENABLE CLOSE MONITORING BY MEDICAL PERSONNEL. KOTZE SAID HE THOUGHT SOBUKWE MIGHT PLAN TO ASK USG TO WEIGH IN WITH SAG IF REQUEST FOR TRANSFER IS DENIED.

3. MRS. SOBUKWE TOLD US DURING VISIT THAT MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE TOLD HER EARLIER SAME DAY THAT THE APPLICATION, WHICH HAS BEEN PENDING FOR ABOUT 10 DAYS IS "STILL BEING PROCESSED." IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION BY REV. KOTZE ABOUT POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE BY "OTHER GOVERNMENTS". MRS. SOBUKWE SAID SHE PLANNED TO "GIVE THEM UNTIL EARLY NEXT WEEK," I.E., OCT 10-11, BEFORE DECIDING WHAT "OTHER STEPS" MIGHT BE TAKEN.

4. DURING VISIT MR. SOBUKWE, THOUGH OBVIOUSLY IN CONSIDERABLE PAIN FROM EFFECTS O COBALT THERAPY, WAS ABLE TO CARRY ON ANIMATED CONVERSATION AND DISPLAYED CONFIDENTIAL

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CONSIDERABLE SPIRIT AND COURAGE. REV. KOTZE TOLD CONGENOFF LATER THAT DOCTORS SAID OPERATION HAD REVEALED A "MASSIVE CARCINOMA" AND THAT IN ALL PROBABILITY THE ILLNESS IS "TERMINAL" ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO WAY OF TELLING HOW MUCH TIME MIGHT BE LEFT. KOTZE SAID MRS. SOBUKWE DID NOT RPT NOT OBJECT TO THIS INFORMATION BEING REPORTED TO USG BUT ASKED THAT IT BE CLOSELY HELD.

5. FOR PRETORIA: WHILE SOBUKWES DID NOT RPT NOT REQUEST ANY SPECIFIC USG ACTION AT THIS TIME, IMPLICATION WAS THAT THEY MIGHT WELL SEEK OUR INTERVENTION WITH JUSTICE MINISTRY IF THEIR APPLICATION NOT APPROVED BY EARLY NEXT WEEK.WILLIAMS

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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TAGS: PINT, SF, PAC, PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS, (SOBUKWE, ROBERT)
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